PATENT Customer No. 22,852 Attorney Docket No. **7019.0004-00**

O F. E 400 B

Sir:

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Ap	plication of:)
Amy M	ULDERRY et al.) Group Art Unit: 3627
Applicat	tion No.: 09/473,649	Examiner: O'Connor, Gerald J.
Filed: I	December 28, 1999))
Ŋ	METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MARKETING PRODUCTS OVER THE INTERNET) Confirmation No.: 1261)
Commis P.O. Box	ssioner for Patents x 1450	
Alexand	lria, VA 22313-1450	

RESPONSE TO NOTIFICATION OF NON-COMPLIANT APPEAL BRIEF AND RESUBMISSION OF SUBSTITUTE APPEAL BRIEF

In response to the Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief mailed on October 20, 2005, Applicants submit this paper together with another copy of the substitute Appeal Brief that was filed on July 29, 2005. In a telephone conference on November 16, 2005, the Examiner stated that the Notification appears to be in error and that the substitute Appeal Brief filed on July 29, 2005, complies with the regulations set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 41.37. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the Notification and accept the substitute Appeal Brief submitted herewith (which is identical to the substitute Appeal Brief filed on July 29, 2005).

In brief summary, Appellants filed a Notice of Appeal on January 21, 2005 in response to the Final Office Action mailed on July 28, 2004. The Notice of Appeal was filed together with a petition for a two-month extension of time and fee payment that supplemented a petition for a one-month extension of time and fee payment previously filed on November 3, 2004. Thus, the

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deadline for responding to the July 28, 2004, Final Office Action was properly extended until January 28, 2005, and the Notice of Appeal filed on January 21, 2005, was timely filed.

In support of the Notice of Appeal and pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 41.37, Appellants filed an Appeal Brief and the required fee on April 18, 2005 together with a petition for a one-month extension of time and fee payment. Thus, the deadline for filing the Appeal Brief was properly extended until April 21, 2005, and the Appeal Brief was timely filed.

The Examiner issued a Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief on June 21, 2005 raising several objections to the Appeal Brief under 37 C.F.R. § 41.37. Appellants responded by filing a substitute Appeal Brief on July 29, 2005 together with a petition for a one-month extension of time and fee payment. Thus, the deadline for responding to the June 21, 2005 Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief was properly extended until August 21, 2005, and the substitute Appeal Brief was timely filed. Among other things, the substitute Appeal Brief contains the following section as specified in 37 C.F.R. § 41.37:

III. Status of Claims

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9 are pending in this application and have been finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 3, 6, and 10-31 have been canceled. No claims have been allowed. Appellants appeal rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9.

7/29/05 Appeal Brief, p. 3. As the Examiner now agrees, this section is in full compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 41.37(c)(iii).

Although the substitute Appeal Brief, including section III, complied with the applicable regulations, the Examiner issued another Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief on

PATENT

Customer No. 22,852

Application No. 09/473,649

Filed: December 28, 1999 Attorney Docket No. **7019.0004-00**

October 20, 2005 stating that "[t]he brief does not contain a correct statement of the status of all

claims...or does not identify the appealed claims...." As the Examiner has acknowledged, this

Notification was issued in error. Therefore, Applicants request the withdrawal of the

Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief and the timely entry of the substitute Appeal Brief

filed herewith.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any

required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,

GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: November 17, 2005

Erika H. Arner

Reg. No. 57,540

ATTACHMENTS:

Copy of Appeal Brief filed on July 29, 2005

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

) Group Art Unit: 3627
) Examiner: O'Connor, Gerald J.
)
) Confirmation No.: 1261)

Attention: Mail Stop Appeal Brief Patents

Commissioner for Patents Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 41.37

This appeal is in response to the final rejection mailed July 28, 2004, of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9, which are set forth in the attached Claims Appendix. In support of a Notice of Appeal filed January 21, 2005, and pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 41.37, Appellants filed an Appeal Brief on April 18, 2005, together with the required fee of \$500.00. The Appeal Brief of April 18, 2005, was timely filed, because the January 21, 2005 Notice of Appeal was accompanied by a Petition for a three-month extension of time and payment of appropriate fees and was filed within six months of the July 28, 2004 final rejection. The Appeal Brief filed April 18, 2005, was filed within three months of the filing date of the January 21, 2005 Notice of Appeal and was accompanied by a Petition for a one-month extension of time and payment of appropriate fees, thus extending the period for filing of an Appeal Brief to April 21, 2005.

On June 21, 2005, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued a Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief requiring a Substitute Appeal Brief within one month, with extensions provided under 37 CFR1.136. The present Appeal Brief, accompanied by a Petition for a one-month extension of time and fee of \$120.00 is filed within two months of June 21, 2005, and is thus timely filed.

If any additional fees are required or if the enclosed payment is insufficient, Appellants request that the required fees be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-0916.



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I. Real Party in Interest

Time Consumer Marketing, Inc. is the Real Party in Interest of this application as evidenced by an Assignment recorded in the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office on May 1, 2000, at reel 010744, frame 0397.

II. Related Appeals and Interferences

Appellants, the Assignee, and Appellants' undersigned legal representative know of no other appeals or interferences that will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

III. Status of Claims

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9 are pending in this application and have been finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 3, 6, and 10-31 have been canceled. No claims have been allowed. Appellants appeal rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9.

IV. Status of Amendments

All claim amendments have been entered as of the filing of this Appeal Brief. No amendments were filed after the final rejection.

V. Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

A. Independent Claim 1

Independent claim 1 sets forth a method of completing a plurality of transactions on a computer network involving at least one customer computer directly operated by a customer (see Fig. 1, element 10) and a plurality of merchant computers (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 8, 11. 14-15 and Fig. 1, elements 12 and 14), comprising: transmitting an offer from a first merchant computer to a customer computer; transmitting information inputted by the customer from the customer computer to the first merchant computer in response to the offer; utilizing the information inputted by the customer to process the offer, wherein said information inputted by the customer contains a payment method and customer identification data required by said first merchant computer to process said offer (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 13, ll. 7-20); transmitting a second offer from a second merchant computer to said customer computer (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 14, ll. 5-10); transmitting said information inputted by the customer from said first merchant computer to said second merchant computer, provided said customer computer accepts said second offer (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 5, ll. 9-11 and p. 4, 11. 11-20); processing said information inputted by the customer by said second merchant computer; causing a merchandise to be delivered to the customer associated with said information inputted by the customer; and automatically debiting a customer account for a purchase corresponding to said information inputted by the customer after said merchandise has

been delivered, provided said customer does not cancel future delivery of said merchandise. (See also Appellants' Specification, p. 19, ll. 10-13.)

B. Independent Claim 7

Independent claim 7 sets forth a method of completing a plurality of transactions on a computer network involving at least one customer computer directly operated by a customer (see Fig. 1, element 10) and a plurality of merchant computers (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 8, Il. 14-15 and Fig. 1, elements 12 and 14), comprising: transmitting an offer from a first merchant computer to a customer computer; transmitting information inputted by the customer from the customer computer to the first merchant computer in response to the offer; utilizing the information inputted by the customer to process the offer, wherein said information inputted by the customer contains a payment method and customer identification data required by said first merchant computer to process said offer (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 13, ll. 7-20); transmitting a second offer from at least a second merchant computer to said customer computer (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 5, ll. 9-10); transmitting said information inputted by the customer from said first merchant computer to said at least second merchant computer, provided said customer computer accepts said second offer (see, e.g., Appellants' Specification, p. 5, ll. 9-11 and p. 14, ll. 11-20); processing said information inputted by the customer by at least said second merchant computer; causing a merchandise to be delivered to the customer associated with said information inputted by the customer; and automatically debiting a customer account for a purchase corresponding to said information inputted by the customer after said

merchandise has been delivered, provided said customer does not cancel future delivery of said merchandise. (See also Appellants' Specification, p. 19, ll. 10-13.)

VI. Grounds of Rejection to Be Reviewed on Appeal

In the Final Office Action dated July 28, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9 as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,926,796 to Walker et al. (Walker) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,543,607 to Watanabe et al. (Watanabe).

VII. Argument

A. Issues

- (a) Whether the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over *Walker* in view of *Watanabe* can be sustained when the references fail to disclose or suggest a method including automatically debiting a customer account for a purchase corresponding to information inputted by a customer after merchandise has been delivered.
- (b) Whether the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over *Walker* in view *Watanabe* can be sustained when the prior art provides no motivation to combine the references or a reasonable expectation of success from doing so.

B. Arguments

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9 are not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Walker in view of Watanabe. First, Walker and Watanabe fail to teach or suggest all the limitations required by claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9. Further, the Examiner has not shown any suggestion or motivation, either in Walker or Watanabe, or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references in a manner resulting in the claimed invention. Finally, the Examiner has not shown any reasonable expectation of success from combining Walker and Watanabe in a manner resulting in the claimed invention. Appellants therefore respectfully request that the Board reverse the rejections of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), each of three requirements must be met. First, the references, taken alone or combined, must teach or suggest

each and every element recited in the claims. M.P.E.P. § 2143.03 (8th ed. 2001, revised May 2004). Second, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references in a manner resulting in the claimed invention. *Id.* at § 2143.01. Third, a reasonable expectation of success must exist that the proposed modification will work for the intended purpose. *Id.* at § 2143.02. Moreover, each of these requirements must "be found in the prior art, and not be based on Appellants' disclosure." *Id.* at § 2143.

Walker and/or Watanabe do not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claims 1 and 7. For example, neither reference teaches or suggests the claimed method including the step of "automatically debiting a customer account for a purchase corresponding to said information inputted by the customer after said merchandise has been delivered, provided said customer does not cancel future delivery of said merchandise," as independent claims 1 and 7 recite. Claims 2, 4, and 5 depend from claim 1, and claims 8 and 9 depend from claim 7 and are not obvious over the combination of Walker and Watanabe at least due to their dependence from claims 1 and 7, respectively.

1. Overview of Walker et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,926,796

Walker, Abstract. When a customer selects a single issue of a periodical for purchase, a cashier at a point of sale (POS) terminal offers the customer a subscription to that periodical. Walker, col. 10, 11. 6-10. If the customer declines, the cashier proceeds with a conventional single-issue sale. Walker, col. 11, 11. 24-26. If the customer agrees to purchase the periodical subscription,

the cashier first asks the customer to fill out a subscription card indicating customer data and subscription term and price. Then, the cashier transfers subscription and customer-related information from the subscription card into the POS terminal and collects the amount due for the subscription from the customer. *Walker*, col. 11, ll. 28-48.

According to Walker, a cashier at a POS terminal collects and stores subscription information from customers over a period of time, such as a day or a week. At the end of this period, the cashier transmits the subscription information to a retail subscription system. Walker, col. 11, 11. 55-59. Sometime after that, it is transmitted to a fulfillment house for distribution. Walker, col. 12, 11. 12-20.

2. Overview of Watanabe et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,543,607

Watanabe provides a self check-out system capable of reading commercial product codes. Watanabe, Abstract. Watanabe provides for the registration of commercial products with difficult-to-read codes. Watanabe, col. 3, 11. 42-49. In the system of Watanabe, consumers place commercial products they wish to purchase on a conveyor belt. If, prior to loading of the product, the automatic reading of the commercial code does not succeed, the consumer inputs the commercial product code manually, without assistance of a store clerk seems stronger than "manual" vs. "automatic." Watanabe, col. 3, 11. 52-57.

3. The Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7-9 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 Must Be Reversed Because Walker and Watanabe Do Not Teach or Suggest "Automatically Debiting a Customer Account"

Claims 1 and 7 each require, among other things, automatic debiting of a customer account for a purchase. In contrast, Walker discloses manual debiting. The Examiner alleges

that automatically debiting a customer account is inherently taught by *Walker*. According to the Examiner, the claimed automatic debiting is "inherent," allegedly because *Walker* teaches at col. 12, ll. 6-53 debiting the account of issues-owed by one issue after each additional issue is delivered (Office Action of July 28, 2004, p. 4, ll. 1-2). Appellants respectfully disagree.

To establish inherency, the extrinsic evidence must make clear that the missing descriptive matter is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference. Inherency, however, may not be established by probabilities or possibilities. M.P.E.P. § 2112 (8th ed. 2001, revised May 2004). The fact that a certain result or characteristic may occur or be present in the prior art is not sufficient to establish the inherency of that result or characteristic. *Id*.

Walker discloses, at most, manual collection of funds, not automatic debiting. Walker, col. 12, ll. 6-54. Furthermore, Walker lacks any extrinsic evidence making clear that the automatic debiting is necessarily present, as the M.P.E.P requires. Although the Examiner correctly points out that features "that are necessarily... present" are inherent, automatic debiting is not necessary for, and is in fact preclusive of, the manual collection of funds disclosed in Walker. Notwithstanding the Examiner's assertions, Appellants respectfully submit that the term "automatic" does not mean "manual."

Walker discloses accepting subscriber information and entering it into a subscriber database. Walker, col. 12, ll. 6-14. Walker further discloses a fulfillment process that determines whether a single issue has been delivered and, if not, instructs a subscription database to deliver a normal number of issues, less one issue. Walker, col. 12, ll. 15-32. Payment in Walker is collected by a cashier at a POS terminal; that is, Walker discloses only manual

collection of funds from customers. Thus, "automatically debiting a customer account," as recited directly or indirectly in claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9, cannot be inherently taught nor suggested by *Walker*.

The Examiner also cited *Watanabe* in support of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103. However, *Watanabe* is not relied on to teach, and in fact does not teach or support "automatic debiting of a customer account for a purchase" missing from *Walker*. Accordingly, neither reference teaches or suggests "automatically debiting of a customer account," as required by claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9.

4. The Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7-9 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 Must Be Reversed Because Walker and Watanabe Do Not Teach or Suggest Automatically Debiting a Customer Account for a Purchase "After Merchandise Has Been Delivered"

Walker and Watanabe, taken alone or in combination, also fail to teach or suggest the claimed automatic debiting of a customer account "after said merchandise has been delivered." Walker, for example, teaches that prior to delivery, a cashier "collects the amount due for the subscription from customer 110." Walker, col. 11, ll. 46-48. Payment prior to delivery is the only practical interpretation of Walker because the process takes place in a retail environment (Walker, col. 4. ll. 8-10), where customers do not receive merchandise without first paying for it. Thereafter, a fulfillment house instructs the subscription database to deliver the normal number of subscription issues less one issue. Walker, col. 12, ll. 26-28. Thus, Walker does not teach or suggest Appellants' claimed method of "automatically debiting a customer account . . . after said merchandise has been delivered," as claims 1 and 7 recite.

Watanabe fails to teach the claimed elements missing from Walker. That is, Watanabe is also silent as to automatic debiting of a customer account after said merchandise has been delivered. And the Examiner does not even allege otherwise. Accordingly, neither reference teaches or suggests "automatically debiting of a customer account... after said merchandise has been delivered," as claims 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7-9 recite.

5. The Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7-9 Must Be Reversed Because No Motivation Has Been Shown to Combine the Teachings of Walker and Watanabe

Even if the references were to have collectively taught each and every element of the claims (which they do not), the Examiner has not shown any suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the applied references or to combine their teachings.

Walker teaches a system for selling subscriptions to periodicals in a retail environment, whereas Watanabe teaches a self check-out system capable of reading commercial product codes. Thus, the applied references are directed to different systems. The Examiner has merely alleged that Watanabe "shows a similar customer computer." (July 28, 2005 Final Office Action, p. 4.) Appellants respectfully submit that even if the Examiner's allegation of similarity is correct, such similarity, as the only basis for motivation, is still insufficient to provide a "suggestion or motivation... to combine the references in a manner resulting in the claimed invention," as the M.P.E.P. requires.

Therefore, Walker and Watanabe, taken alone or in combination, do not suggest the desirability of any modification to result in Appellants' claimed invention.

6. The Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7-9 Must Be Reversed Because Walker and Watanabe Are Not Combinable with a Reasonable Expectation of Success

The Examiner alleges that combining Walker and Watanabe would be desirable to "achieve higher efficiency for the retailer." (July 28, 2005 Final Office Action, p. 4.) However, the Examiner did not provide any reason why one of ordinary skill in the art would have a reasonable expectation of success from combining a self check-out system of Watanabe designed to register difficult-to-read codes of commercial products (Watanabe, col. 3, ll. 42-49) with the Walker system, where a store clerk performs functions of collecting payment for magazine subscription from the retail customers.

In summary, (1) the cited references, taken either alone or collectively, fail to teach each and every element required by the claims; (2) there is no motivation to combine or modify the teachings of the cited references to arrive at the present claimed invention; and (3) the references do not establish a reasonable expectation of success expected by one of ordinary skill in the art, even if Walker and Watanabe were to be combined.

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Application No. 09/473,649 Filed: December 28, 1999

Attorney Docket No. 7019.0004-00

Conclusion

The Examiner, relying on U.S. Patent No. 5,926,796 to Walker et al. and U.S. Patent No.

5,543,607 to Watanabe et al., has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness with

regard to claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9. Accordingly, the rejections of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9

under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be reversed.

The attached Appendix contains a clean copy of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9 involved in this

Appeal. To the extent any further extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain

entry of this Appeal Brief, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees

due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1 .17 that are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required

for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account

No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: July 29, 2005

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VIII. Claims Appendix

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-9, the subject of this appeal, read:

1. A method of completing a plurality of transactions on a computer network involving at least one customer computer directly operated by a customer and a plurality of merchant computers, said method comprising the following steps:

transmitting an offer from a first merchant computer to a customer computer;

transmitting information inputted by the customer from the customer computer to
the first merchant computer in response to the offer;

utilizing the information inputted by the customer to process the offer, wherein said information inputted by the customer contains a payment method and customer identification data required by said first merchant computer to process said offer;

transmitting a second offer from a second merchant computer to said customer computer;

transmitting said information inputted by the customer from said first merchant computer to said second merchant computer, provided said customer computer accepts said second offer[,]

processing said information inputted by the customer by said second merchant computer;

causing a merchandise to be delivered to the customer associated with said information inputted by the customer; and

automatically debiting a customer account for a purchase corresponding to said information inputted by the customer after said merchandise has been delivered, provided said customer does not cancel future delivery of said merchandise.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of transmitting an offer is further comprised of the following steps:

sending an offer from said second merchant computer to said first merchant computer; and

presenting said offer by said first merchant computer to said customer computer.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of transmitting an offer is further comprised of the following steps:

sending an offer from said second merchant computer to said first merchant computer;

storing said offer on said first merchant computer; and presenting said offer by said first merchant computer to said customer computer.

- 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said merchandise is a predetermined number of issues of a periodical.
- 7. A method of completing a plurality of transactions on a computer network involving at least one customer computer directly operated by a customer and a plurality of merchant computers, said method comprising the following steps:

transmitting an offer from a first merchant computer to a customer computer;

transmitting information inputted by the customer from the customer computer to the first merchant computer in response to the offer;

utilizing the information inputted by the customer to process the offer, wherein said information inputted by the customer contains a payment method and customer identification data required by said first merchant computer to process said offer;

transmitting a second offer from at least a second merchant computer to said customer computer;

transmitting said information inputted by the customer from said first merchant computer to said at least second merchant computer, provided said customer computer accepts said second offer;

processing said information inputted by the customer by at least said second merchant computer;

causing a merchandise to be delivered to the customer associated with said information inputted by the customer; and

automatically debiting a customer account for a purchase corresponding to said information inputted by the customer after said merchandise has been delivered, provided said customer does not cancel future delivery of said merchandise.

8. The method from claim 7 wherein said step of transmitting an offer is further comprised of the following steps:

sending an offer from said at least second merchant computer to said first merchant computer; and

presenting said offer by said first merchant computer to said customer computer.

9. The method from claim 7 wherein said step of transmitting an offer is further comprised of the following steps:

sending an offer from said at least second merchant computer to said first merchant computer;

storing said offer on said first merchant computer; and presenting said offer by said first merchant computer to said customer computer.

IX. Evidence Appendix

No evidence has been submitted pursuant to §§ 1.130, 1.131, or 1.132 or entered by the Examiner and relied upon by Appellants.

X. Related Proceedings Appendix

There are no pending related proceedings.